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HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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SOUL-RELATIONSHIP.

"For ye are all the children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."—Gal. iii., 26-29.

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit."—Eph. ii., 19-22.

In both of these passages stands out the same general thought—namely, the highest measure of relationships which is employed in the divine Word. You will observe that one difficulty of interpreting the New Testament consists in this: that it has a subtle, constantly appearing and disappearing, evanescent relation to a higher stage of development; that the manhood which either consciously or unconsciously lies in the mind of the speaker or writer is one which transcends immeasurably the manhood which actually exists here upon earth; and that therefore the teachings of the New Testament are subject to exactly that difficulty which exists in the college, in the school, or in the household, where persons of preëminent culture are endeavoring to convey some idea of a higher stage of knowledge or development to persons of a lower stage.

The study of that one single phenomenon would throw a

great deal of light upon the general principles of interpretation to be established in regard to the New Testament, and would throw a great deal of light, also, upon many of the unsettled passages or knotty questions which exist. Every parent knows, we all know, how hard it is to teach the child things which belong to a stage of growth that lies beyond childhood; we are "put to it" all the time by the child's questions; and the attempt to render into the child's language, or rather into the child's idea, the things which we have come to by years and years of growth and knowledge, builds up a system, not of falsehood (that sounds vicious—it carries the idea of bad motive), but a system of fables, or of things that are not true, put for things that are true. If, in regard to some of the representations which are made of God and of the Spirit-life in the earlier periods of the Book, we say, "They were relative to a past age; they were fables, they are not true;" many people are shocked: because they have an idea that revelation is absolute truth, and that in teaching the world God could not honorably or purely have done other than to tell the exact truth, always. But what if human language, through which, if through anything, revelation is to be made, was fashioned in the earlier and undeveloped period of man's existence, so that it had not the terms which belong to higher development—as is the fact? What if it were not even now in the power of words to convey ideas for which words have never been found? How are you going to get the higher truths down into lower forms?

Does a mother, when she has grown old, repent herself of the thousand little artifices by which she attempted to get truth into the mind of the child? She reads a fairy story; and the child is perfectly bewildered, delighted, dazzled with it; but, is it true? No, it is not true; and yet it is true: that is, it is not true in the lower realm of fact, but in the higher realm of imagination it is true. It never happened; but then it conveys an idea of happenings of a certain sort. You make up a little fable—that is to say, an untedious novel—and rehearse it to your children; and they ask, "Is it true?" You can say either way: you can say, "Well, no; it

is not true"; or you can say, "Yes, it is true." Do you not know that sometimes an untruth is truer than a truth?—I do not mean in the thing itself, but in the impression which it produces on persons' minds. The history of the world shows that in the divine development of a system of instruction precisely those methods were employed for the purposes of unfolding and carrying up men's ideas, and elevating the standard of their inward manhood to a higher plane, which are employed in every rational family.

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child."

Very well, Paul, then your father and mother had to teach you as you could understand, or else you would not have understood as a child. You have to adapt things to each other. Although men have come to intelligence and refinement, and to a much higher stage of development than they had reached in the times of the apostles, yet all that is known in this world with regard to the after-life, the heavenly state of the human soul, is as nothing. Paul says in the thirteenth of first Corinthians that our knowledge of the future condition is like the knowledge of our childhood in regard to the condition of mature manhood. He declares that the whole after-scene is yet vague to him. He says, "We see through a glass, darkly." He says that now, in this life, we see only in part; and that only then, in the future life, shall we see fully, as one sees when he comes face to face with another.

All through the instruction of the Saviour, all through his discourses in the temple with the educated Jews, you see the tests which he brought to bear. It is evident that he had a consciousness of this higher knowledge, and was attempting to teach men who had not that consciousness, nor the conditions of it in their minds; so that when he attempted to approve his divinity before them, he did not say, "I am God because I can do this or that;" he said, "I am divine, and I see divine truths in their essence. When you look at these truths, you have no moral interpreting sensibility, and therefore it is impossible for you to know what they are. You are of your father, and you understand the things which belong to him; I am of my father, and

when I do works which have reference to the life beyond this world, you do not understand them, because the Spirit of God is not in you. You have no power by which to judge of these things." In the teaching of the apostle, when he is speaking of men and society, and their relationships, there is hovering above a higher vision or ideal.

Now, in the passage which I have selected from Galatians, you will observe that we are represented as being "all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." And it is declared that in a state of relationship which stands in God through Christ Jesus,—or, to put it in more philosophical phraseology, in that state which shall be ours when we come to our ideal manhood, so that we shall possess the divine nature, not having it as we do here in germs, but in its higher developed form—all the lower distinctions are abolished. They are relative to a nascent, germinant condition in time, and in the flesh; but in Jesus Christ "there is neither Jew nor Greek:" national relationships are all swept away on that higher plane. "There is neither bond nor free:" all arbitrary conditions, relative and subordinate, are gone in that higher stage, however necessary they may be in these lower physical circumstances. "There is neither male nor female" however indispensable the one and the other may be to the relations of human life on earth. In the spirit-world all that which is relative to time and the body ceases. "You are all one [that is, alike] in Christ Jesus"—the crowned head and the peasant; the armed warrior and the feeblest child; the mightiest philosopher and the boy at school; men and women; foreigners and they that are bred at home; bond and free. In that higher manhood all those relationships which here necessarily and properly discriminate men, and set them apart from each other, are so changed that it is not right to conceive of the other life from the divisions which belong to this life. The relationships which we have there are higher and nobler than any that we have here.

And so it is with the other passage which I read, "We are no more strangers and foreigners." That is to say, all those enclosures in which men live in this mortal state, all those household divisions which exist here, in the higher

state are unknown ; and we have a glimpse of this, as I shall show, even in this world.

As we pass along by the magnificent houses in some street, we know that in them is living the father, and his brood of children that inherit his wealth, and have participated in it. We know that in these houses are bands of people connected together by various ties, and that for the most part they live honorably and joyfully together. If we pass by them at night we see bright lights shining in them, and other evidences of conviviality ; and if we pass them by day we observe signs of comfort and happiness. Now, though I may be a very respectable man, I should not think it right for me to walk into one of these houses unbidden, and sit down in the parlor, and commence looking at the book, or the picture, or playing with the children. Suppose I did it, and the father came in and looked at me inquiringly, I should not think of saying, "I took the liberty, sir, to come in here. I am no stranger to you. I belong to just such men as you are. These little ones are my children, and these grown people are my brothers and sisters and friends. Do not trouble yourself about me. I will make myself at home here." I think he would stare at me, and would have a right to stare at me, if I did anything of that sort.

But the apostle says, "We are no more strangers in the light of the higher development. There is a state, there is a condition, there is a place, in which men and women, wherever you find them, are like each other, and are equal to each other, in Christ Jesus." He means the higher, the heavenly realm of development. The time is coming when we shall be no more strangers and no more foreigners. Now we are divided in spiritual things as we could not be divided by the highest mountains through which tunnels cannot be pierced ; but there is coming a time when we shall not be foreigners in any land, and when we shall all speak the same tongue—not literally, but in a sense of spiritual conception.

We are now, in this nascent state of existence on earth, connected, in the first instance, by blood, by household contiguity ; and that is supposed to be the basis and test of all genuine relationship.

It is supposed that there may be metaphorical and imaginary relationships, but that the real relationship is that of the flesh. There is a relationship between parent and child, and between brothers and sisters, in the household, which is noble, and which is justified by its necessities, and made honorable by its fruits; but is it the highest relationship? Out of it does there not grow something higher yet? What is it that by-and-by takes one away from both father and mother, to one with whom he has no blood-relationship and no kinship, to give to her a more absorbing love, and a more perfect life than he does to father and mother? It is a new and a higher affection. It is an affection which is founded on elective affinities—on spirit reasons.

As we go out of the household, we find other mutual relations of men. And first, they are grouped together in neighborhoods, and common exigencies and common necessities make neighbors sustain relationships to each other.

Sometimes these relationships are vexed by little frets, and bickerings, and envies, and jealousies, and passions. How often neighbors quarrel about a stone-wall that is two inches over the line; or about some animal that has broken into this or that field; or about some matter touching the treatment of one another's children! And so men live in their canine nature, in their vulpine nature, all their lives disturbed and annoyed by their passions. And yet, in good neighborhoods, there are important and necessary relations which are fruitful of joy all through one's life.

You cannot tell how much you think of a neighbor until you meet him abroad, in Paris, for instance, at the Grand Hotel. He may be a man that you scarcely thought of at home; he may be a man that you looked upon as a milk-and-water sort of fellow; as an indifferent kind of person; as a punctuation point, so to speak, in society; but seeing him there, you almost kiss him, you are so glad to see him; and you say, "Why, neighbor, *how do you do?*" He is glad to see you, too, though he rather wonders at the affection which you display toward him, and which he hardly suspected before.

There is a relationship in neighborhood, which is worth

making better, and which is indispensable to comfortable and kind living.

Then we have relationships of a civil character. We are drawn together by our common duties; by our obligations under the law; by those things which we are bound to do in partnership for the maintenance of the commonwealth, and for the peace and safety of our own households in connection with the households of others. For so society is built that the interest of each one is the interest of the whole, and the interest of the whole is the interest of each one.

Then come arbitrary commercial relationships, in things which may involve honor, rectitude, truth, honesty, pride, vanity and selfishness. They may be high or low just as we gauge them; but they are real. The partner is next to the brother; and those who are of the same guild or kind have a sort of connection together, and are related to each other both by antipathies and by sympathies.

Now, when I am talking thus, and speaking as far as this, everybody says, "You are on good ground; you are doing very well; what you say is sensible. Yes, people are related because they are born together, because they live in the same neighborhood, and because they perform the same offices. Yes, the relationships of men in common every day life are good, substantial, effectual relationships. Yes, and men are united together under the same government, in the same state, and in the same county. They are substantially joined together if they belong to the same party. I admit that these are all actual relationships. Yes, and if men are in business together, their interests are co-related. And the playing of partners into each others' hands brings them yet closer together."

And I begin to say, "But there are more relationships than these; there are relationships which are established by reason of taste." "Yes." "There are relationships which are established by reason of like affections." "Y-e-s—yes—yes; but don't go too far. Now you are getting on rather misty ground." "There are relationships which are established by moral similarities and attractions." "Yes—perhaps; but I believe in good substantial things. I cannot fly

quite so high as you can. You are metaphysical. You believe in these invisible *isms*—I do not know what they are ; I suppose they are right ; I think poetry is good in its place ; but I like facts. I like things that I can put my foot and hand on. I am sensible.” Yes, and you are *sensuous*. You believe as far as your sight can go in the lower animal sphere ; you believe a little further—as far as those things go which knit you together in business and politics ; but the moment you rise to that plane where those relationships exist which spring out of an ideal manhood—which are not merely possible, but certain, being developed partly in this life, and to be developed eminently in the life which is to come ; the moment we lift ourselves up into the realm of our true manhood—that moment men’s faith begins to fall off, and to say, “ Ah ! that is poetry. It is very pretty to think of, but you cannot eat it, nor drink it, nor handle it, nor do much with it.”

Now, I affirm that the manhood which belongs to our coming state, and which is merely hinted at here by germ-spots, by intimations, are not only real, but are more real than the lower elements of our being. They are real because they have an immortal nature. They are things which do not perish with the using. When flesh and blood go down the soul goes up ; and these qualities which join men to each other are imperishable. They survive time and the grave, and the touch of God shall give them form and validity and endless power.

It is this higher relationship that I wish to bring out clearly to your minds. When a man’s soul is for the time disengaged from its lower relations, it lifts itself into commerce with the divine, it is stimulated, it is infused with the very spirit of heaven, and even here we sometimes get foregleams of that coming life of divine purity. And when, hereafter, the soul shall rise, under this divine loving influence, into its own normal self, into its fullest and realest self, then those divisions which separate us here (which are useful for education, which are necessary to our development), those demarcations and separating lines which divide us, will be done away ; and all ties of consanguinity and affinity will be superseded by the higher and truer relationship of the soul,

which will be more real, more penetrating, and more plentiful in blessing. The invisible and ideal, or, if you please, the romantic conception, is nearer to final truth than the visible and the substantial.

We are, in God's universe, not foreigners to any, nor strangers anywhere. In Jesus Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile; neither bond nor free: men are without such marks as divide one from another in this world. There is an altitude, there is an experience, there is a realm in which souls, coming together, shall all own each other; all have liberty with each other; all dwell upon a like plane, and under a like influence—this is the apostolic conception of the spiritual future.

If this be true, ought we not to seek, not to gratify that which stands immutable in our lower nature, but to gain that which we are to come to, if we come to it at all, by accepting Christ?

“As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.”

This high relationship is evolved. It is the last and highest stage of the evolution through which we are going. If we believe in this higher development, and in the nobleness and fruitfulness of it, ought we not to take into consideration—revolutionary consideration—the fact that a man who lives in these relationships of the body and of the physical globe, lives in the meagerest and poorest elements of his nature.

It seems to me that men are paupers, not having developed those elements with which they are endowed. I complain of men, I find fault with them, because they build their families, their business, their whole commerce one with another, on an animal, visible, sensuous plane—because they do not bring down these ideals and glorious possibilities of the future, and employ them to irradiate, refine, sweeten, and ennoble the relationships which do and must subsist between them here.

There are some who would say, “Since we are no more strangers and pilgrims, and since we are workers together with God, we ought not to esteem any longer these outward relationships.” Nay, because we are tending to a higher

state it seems to me that these relationships ought to be brighter and sweeter.

We talk a great deal about the refinement of the family ; and there are a great many refinements in the family ; yet, when I look at the way in which men live at large, one with another, I am pained at the harshness and hardness of social life ; at its narrow scope of thought and feeling ; at its servitudes ; at its divisions ; at its envyings ; at its barbarities ; at its despotisms ; at its cruelties.

When I look into the actual structure of life, I see, in one circle, a woman who, by her temper, is a flame of fire ; and I see that there is fever incessantly there ; nor can there be peace. In another circle I see a man, rude, coarse, cruel-mouthed, who rules with an iron hand everybody that comes within his reach. Everything has to yield to him. He treads on a score of people. Their business is to make him happier—to fan him ; to pat him ; to feed him ; to take things out of his way ; to soften his path ; to do him good. He stands as a great absorbent of all the light and heat that belongs not only to him, but to all those by whom he is surrounded. He is as great a despot in the family as ever Nero was on the throne of Rome.

When I look at the quarrelings in families ; when I see how much men live to eat and drink and sleep ; when I observe how low-thoughted they are, how little they manifest that sweetness of affection which serves, and how little there is that irradiates their lives—in comparison with what there might be, my heart sickens. There are notable exceptions ; there are admirable types of something better and higher ; yet, looking at the community collectively, men are on a plane but one or two removes from the animal condition. They are purified a little, they are restrained a little, there is a germ of affection here and there, but there is not that which we might be justified in expecting to see in beings who are dignified with the title of sons of God. It is only when we remember that they are God's sons, and that they are under the divine care, that we can look upon them with much complacency.

You hear many sermons that tell you that you ought to

be meek and humble—and that is all very well ; but I am afraid that you do not hear many sermons that tell you that you live in your families to growl, and bite, and devour one another ; and that the pride and selfishness and vanity of your nature are more influential than the spiritual affinities—than hope, and joy, and love, and peace, and generous sweetness.

And I say that if you are sons of God, if you are lifted up by the spirit of God so that you understand the higher, the nobler, and the diviner relations of your natures to each other, you ought to have the benefit of them in your families. You ought to bring these relations down into the household, and to realize them there, to some extent ; you should make the outward and the visible elements of your life work for them. There can be nothing too graceful, or too truthful, or too generous, or too disinterested, or too gracious for the household. All that which a man expects to be in heaven he ought to try to be from day to day with his wife and children, and those who are members of his family. The spirit of heaven would diminish greatly the distance between the parlor and the kitchen, between “the stranger that is within thy gates” and thine own self. The household is the strongest institution in our land, and the one that is nearest divine. The Church is not to be compared in fruitfulness of spirit with the family. The Church is bleak and barren as compared with the household. But the household has not begun to rise and shine in this world as it will when the full glory of the Lord shall have arisen upon it.

Secondly, in the conditions of man’s life, relationships are, and will long be, very low and unfruitful. If in the very family, where we have the advantage of all the helps which come from common loves and common rearing, the higher relationships of life be relatively undeveloped and imperfect, how much more must they be undeveloped and imperfect where the intercourse of men is low and physical, and of the selfish world.

There is, in the first place, a spirit of indifference with which we meet men. We meet them not even with as much consideration as that with which ants meet each other. If,

in summer you watch ants as they are running along on the bark of a tree in search of sweet juices, you will observe that they never come together in streams without kissing. They touch and go, always. But in human life we meet throngs and throngs and throngs of men, and they are no more to us than the shadows which the leaves of trees cast down upon the ground. The sense of the greatness of manhood, the sense of *being* in a man, is comparatively small. To the great mass of men we are simply indifferent.

And then, there are between us and those whom we should love, strivings, and rivalries, and matches of strength or skill. Our relations to them are such as lead to various conflicts and partisan affiliations and oppositions. We are thrown continually into antagonism toward men. We are on the jar with them almost all the while. If you put on all the pressure of the bellows of this organ, and pull out all the stops, press all the keys and pedals together, and bring out that multitudinous groaning and screaming and roaring which would be produced by all the discordant and clashing notes of the instrument,—that's New York.

You have thought, perhaps, on seeing me go up Wall street, and look on one side and on the other, that I was thinking about stocks; that I was wishing I knew how to get some of that gold which was stored there: I was not thinking of any such thing. I may have wished that I could plan a little more wisely about money matters, but that was not the burden of my thoughts. When I have been over there, I have watched how men came together; how insincere they were in their courtesies; how they were actuated by self-interest; how politic they were; how they watched each other for an opportunity to get the advantage. There is a general superficial good nature, there is a certain amount of good fellowship, and men meet each other with kindly feelings, apparently; but when you come to look in where the man is himself in the plenitude of his power, how superficial are these relationships! and how real are their collisions and strifes! Men go armed, not with visible mail, but with mailed thoughts. Men sift what is said to them. They suspect the utterances of their fellow-men. They take every man as he

comes, and measure him, and sit in judgment on what he says and does. The spirit of peace is not in them.

The intercourse of men in business is on a low plane. The animal part of it is in the preponderant. That which allies men with the great herd of lower animals, the self-defensory or aggressive element, the passion of life, gives tone character and color even to their manners.

Society is very low down in the scale. If you measure it by the intelligence which prevails in Caffraria, if you compare its condition with that in which men live in Nootka Sound or Nova Zembla, if you take a standard that is low enough, we live very high; but if you take a conception of manhood in Christ Jesus, that is full of sympathy and gentleness and genial influence and lovingness, and measure the way in which men live in society by that standard, then our relations are very coarse, and society is low-toned. What is called high-toned society is the lowest of all, half the time—for I think that feigned good will, and insincere affections, or mere conventional kindness, that carries under it all the poison of envy and jealousy, is worse than the same thing in a less guileful, and so in a less harmful, form.

Thirdly, men in this world have a right to each other in a far higher sense than they have to any considerable extent been accustomed to recognize. I suppose there is nobody who has not some little bit of liking to trace his ancestors. I have spent many hours in New Haven, where my great ancestors landed, in looking up the books, and examining the name of Beecher, on one side, and that of Foote on the other. I like to know who these ancestors in my family were, and what they did; (and it will undoubtedly be a great pleasure to you to know that I have traced up on both sides until I have found a Coat of Arms!)

Now, that instinct is not to be despised. That is a low form of it which consists in tracing one's physical relationship. But I rejoice to think that on the higher plane, not by a figure of speech, and not metaphorically, but in the counsel of God, and in the eternal verity and reality of the spirit life, every noble man and every noble woman that ever lived on earth were my brother and my sister, or my ancestors. No

man ever thought nobly and lived nobly of whom our hearts should not say, He was one of my ancestors. I am right in the line of that man. No man ever wrought to make the world better, that he was not my brother. No man ever labored to exemplify the coming manhood, that he was not kindred to me. Whatever nation he belonged to, he belonged to my nation. Whatever language he spoke, he spoke my language. Whatever sphere he wrought in was my sphere. Whether he was crowned or uncrowned, he was of my lineage. I own him ; and if he is saved he owns me. And all over the world, there are no spirits bearing and enduring, with fortitude and with cheerfulness, in obscurity, that they are not my unknown relations. I have brothers and sisters, oh how many ! My father has an enormous family—for my father is God. My eldest brother is named Jesus Christ. And the relationships which spring out of this fatherhood and this brotherhood—how many they are ! Those sweet spirits who watch in sick rooms through months and through years—living sacrifices for the sake of the poor and the suffering—they are my sisters. Jesus said, “ Who is my mother ? and who are my brethren ? ” “ Who-soever doeth the will of God, he is my mother, my brother and my sister.”

And so, wherever, all over the world, men are denying themselves for rectitude, and enduring for that which is just and true, and living courageously for the right, and exemplifying purity and sweetness, and diffusing happiness, let us be able to claim them and say, They are my brethren !

I have a great many friends in Rome, and the Pope is one of them. He would not come to see me, I suppose ; but I would as lief go to see him as not. He would hardly say that I was orthodox ; but I really believe that he is orthodox ; and I would ordain him if he wanted me to ; and I would let him preach here if he asked the privilege. I believe he is a good old man. As to the cobwebs which he has in his head, those will be brushed away before long, and he will laugh to think how many gewgaws and phantasies he has had. And you, yourself, in another place, have as many as he. We all have them—some in one way, and some in another. But what-

ever in him is good and true and pure and right makes him my brother.

The Catholic Church—that great extended organization—I consider, as a church, to be excessively operose, full of accumulated rubbish; like an old mansion in which a miser has lived, who would not allow anything to be sold, and who put everything in the garret—cradles, truckle-beds, furniture, dishes, broom-handles and the like—through ages, until it has become a vast museum of stuff—miserable stuff. The Church of Rome is crowded full of fables and superstitions and dogmas; and it has a wonderful power of cataloguing; and it puts them all in order, and makes an inventory of them, and tries to have a use for each one; but yet, there are many good things in the Church of Rome. Everybody has his baby-house, his toys, his little artificial things; and in that church there is a vast amount of rubbish; but it has a great deal of feeling that is right and pure and heroic. It has a great deal that is of the spirit—of the very sweetest and choicest spirit—of Christ or of God. And there is not a true man or woman in that church to whom my heart does not say, “Brother, sister, you are mine.” All good people in that church are mine, not oratorically, or rhetorically, nor by any figure of speech, but by a relationship which is higher than that of brother or sister, father or mother. The body cannot make such a relationship as the soul can. Soul-blood is more than body-blood.

I bless God for the Catholic churches which are spreading in this country. I would not hinder them. Some think that a proper examination for a candidate for the church would be this: “Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner?” “I do.” “Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?” “I do.” “Do you hate the Catholics?” “I do.” Step in, then—you are all right.”

I believe in no such creed as that. I acknowledge every man to be a Christian brother who shows himself to be in the temperature of eternal summer, which is the temperature of love, whether he be Catholic, or Episcopalian, or Methodist, or Baptist, or Lutheran, or Congregationalist, or Swedenborgian, or Universalist, or Unitarian. I do not care what hat

a man wears. It is the man under the hat that I care for. I do not care what name you put on a gathering of men if they give evidence that the Spirit of God is in them. By my higher manhood I come into unity with them, though by my lower manhood I am incited to contend against them.

I do not preach Calvinism ; I abhor the central idea of it ; but I think there is not a better service of God on earth than that of a great multitude of theologically Calvinistic preachers ; and do you think I feel oppugnation toward them ? No, I glory in them. I am glad, sometimes, that other persons can preach things which I cannot conscientiously preach, but which answer certain ends of society in its crude state.

Do you think that I am opposed to the great Episcopal Church in its relations in England, in its past history, in the plenitude of its interior experiences, in its multitude of pious men and women, in its long procession of learned works that have spread the light and humanity of the Gospel on the globe ? Do you think I would put any obstacle in their way ? They might not let me preach in their pulpits ; but I do not care for that. They might not let me go to their communion ; but I do not care for that. Why should I care for the communion table so long as I can go to the bosom of the Saviour himself ? These are outward things. They are mere shadows. The weak need them ; but there may be a strength that does not need them. There are a great number of archbishops, bishops, priests, deacons, and holy men and women in that church who are mine in whatever there is of them that will last until after death, and stand in the other life, in the essential elements of humanity, and especially that part of humanity which is sanctified by the spirit of the living God.

Do you think that the great outlying Methodists of this nation—our Christian brethren that are carrying the truth of God into every remote part of this land—are alien from me because they differ from me in certain ordinances and regulations ? I bless God for the existence of every one of them.

So I have a sense, not that I stand strong in this church, or by reason of the number of Congregational churches in New England, and in the West and Northwest. For certain

reasons I am gratified by the gradual increase of Congregationalism and Congregational churches ; but this is no reason why I should not, and no reason why I do not, take pleasure in the increase of the other churches. If anybody thinks he can vex me by starting a Presbyterian church right in this neighborhood, let him try it. I will rejoice in it. If anybody says, " You ought to go into that neighborhood and preach, for the Catholics are taking entire possession of it," I say, " Let them take possession of it." I would rather that they should have it all than that nobody should have it. Though it will be a good thing also to start some other church in their neighborhood ; for I think it better for all the sects that other sects should stand near to them. I think that the action of the sects upon each other is wholesome. At any rate, it keeps them in order and stirs them up. All emulations which are not grating and bitter, and which are confined within reasonable bounds, are perfectly right and wholesome ; and if churches filled with those that love God and their fellow-men are affiliated, you will notice that the moment they rise to a higher plane the spirit of rivalry will cease among them. When on an occasion of special interest, as during a revival of religion, you bring together in a great public meeting members of all the Christian churches, and let them sing and pray together, you will see that all their repulsions and divisions in an instant fade out. The heart-experiences of Christian men affiliate them, and bring them by elective affinity into a moral likeness. Those inspirations and relationships which belong to men's coarser and lower life become more influential when men are in a backslidden state, and make them sectarian ; but the higher inspirations and relationships always make them free and large-minded.

I remark, once more, that this sense of higher relationship, as found in the actual interplay of the higher faculties, or of the faculties in their higher conditions, is a kind of fore-token of the relationships in our future home, and casts upon the dreaded fact of dying a cheer which it much needs, and which it seldom has. The joy of the other life is not simply that we are saved. He is living on a very low plane

who thinks that *salvation* is all that is to be thought of, and who is satisfied with just escaping damnation.

If I go to Europe on a steamship (as I shall not !), my idea of going on a pleasure voyage there, is to make a prosperous passage right straight across, and wake up some morning, and see the crew gathered together on deck, and see the blue line of the land stretched out before us. The sweetest sight that my eye ever rested on was the coast of old Ireland when I first went toward the shores of Europe. The sea was behind me, and the land was before me, and its breath came off to where I was, and I smelt the summer of the soil. I never knew how good it was before. And I went up the channel, clear round to Liverpool, rejoicing at every head-land and sail, and entered the harbor and cast anchor triumphantly. So one wants to make a voyage. But if, in making a voyage, one founders off the coast, and the ship goes down, and other passengers go down, and he swims for his life, and is caught up by a fisherman's boat, half spent and almost insensible, and is brought into some squalid fishing station, and is restored to life again, and wakes up to the consciousness that he has had a little bad brandy poured into his mouth, and in his bewilderment asks, "Where am I?" and is told that he is in "*la belle France*," he says, "Well, it is better to have landed here under these circumstances than not to have landed at all; but it is not exactly as I expected that it would be."

Now, a great many men come to feel about so in regard to getting to heaven. If at last they can be pulled in, so that when the gate is shut they are inside, that is all they care about. If they can get in somehow they will be satisfied. It is a base, selfish, animal desire, just to wish to be rid of pain. There is no inspiration in it. There is no nobleness in it. There is in it no sense of what it is to be a son of God.

Now, I look forward to the other life, and to dying, not as to the putting a screen between me and every possible danger. It is that, and I appreciate it in this lower sense; but it is also that I am to be in the general assembly of the church of the first-born; it is that I am to come into blessed

acquaintanceship and fellowship with the noblest men who have lived on the earth since it had an existence ; it is that I am to go where is Father, where is Jesus my elder Brother ; it is that I am to be in the presence of the nobility of the universe ; it is that I am to stand in that glorious company where my children shall see me, and your children shall see you. My father and mother are there, and your father and mother are there. My brethren and companions are there, and so are yours. A great company from out of this church are there ; and how much purer and more worthy of being remembered with a burning memory of love and sympathy are they now than when they were in our midst !

Do you believe in the communion of the saints ? Do you believe that the saints above are in sympathy with the great multitude of saints that are on earth ? Do you believe that because they have gone out of sight they are lost ? Do you think, because they have risen to a spiritual realization of the eternal sphere, that they are no more yours ? The sound, the noise, the uproar, of this life is but the world's hand that beats time to us as we are moving on toward the real life, and the real heaven, where God brings together those who are fit to live in all the elective affinities of a true spiritual manhood.

Christian brethren, tear away the crape from your doors. Take the black off from your persons. Look cheerfully upon death. Make the tomb bright and beautiful. All the steps which lead to it are full of hope.

When men know that they are coming to riches, the tokens of increasing abundance do not distress them ; and why are you distressed because your hair is white ? Why do you mourn because your eyesight is failing ? Why are you made unhappy because your hand begins to shake ? Why do you lament because old age is creeping upon you ? These signs of infirmity all betoken your approach to the blessed land above.

How can the chestnut drop its fruit unless the burr in some way is made to open ? And so the frost bites the burr, and lets out the nut, that it may come to life again. And how shall we be liberated from the restrictions and hindrances

of this life if there is not something to open the burr and let out the spirit ?

These tokens of decadence in us, if we read them in the light of the higher life, are but the approaching steps of deliverance.

A man that for twenty years has been endungeoned, under the old government of Rome, to-morrow is to see the light of day. All night he cannot sleep, for thinking how the world will look to him. In the morning, afar off his ear detects the sound of tramping in the court-yard, and hears some gate creak and crash back, and the key turn in the rusty lock. Nearer, he hears the long unused bolt of some huge door, with much pains pulled back, and the iron clashing which is caused by opening and shutting it. Now he hears voices ; and they come nearer ; and at last the key is put into the door of his own cell, and it turns in the lock, and the bolt falls back, and the jailor comes in with his companions, bringing a rescript of liberty, and all the implements by which his chains shall be taken off. And does a man sit and cower and cry and shrink because he is being liberated, as you do lest death shall set you free ?

All these tokens of approaching dissolution are to be hailed with joy by those who believe that Christ, who rose from the dead, will bring us, by a glorious resurrection, from the dead, and that this resurrection is not a resurrection of the body (flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God), but that it is a resurrection of the spirit, by which the soul shall be lifted out of these earthly training conditions, and brought into a state of freedom ; so that turning whichever way you may, in all the universe of God, you shall meet not one stranger, and shall hear voices sweeter than any music on earth, and the heart shall say, " I am no longer a stranger or a foreigner ; I am with God, and Christ, and the good men of every age, my parents and children, and companions all ; " and the thought wreathes itself as fragrance about me ; and I say, " Why did I fear and push from me the beatitude and blessedness of my real life ? "

O aged matron ! rejoice in your growing infirmities ; the jailor is drawing nearer and nearer to let you out. O vener-

able father ! tremble on, and rejoice that the way is almost passed over, and that every one of the infirmities of this life shall be left behind, and that your manhood shall be as enduring as the throne of God. O child, fear not to go. Fear not, maiden, to depart. The joys that you leave behind you, compared to the joys to which you go, are as the poor flowers of the wilderness compared with the flowers that blossom in a garden.

And when those have gone out of life who were dear to you, do not look upon death timidly, or as a man of unfaith looks upon it, with blank despair. Remember that you have sent your children and friends into the relationships and plenitude of love, where all shall be one in Christ Jesus, blessed and blessing forever.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

THOU dost not wait, our Father, for our petitions. It is not for thy sake that we draw near and pray to thee, but for our own. We are glad that thou art patient to listen and willing that we should draw near to thee. That thou shouldst desire it is because thou art a Father; and we know how fathers feel toward their children. Even with their imperfections and faults, how does their love bathe them, and clothe them, and perfect them! And in thy sight we can only stand approved in the atmosphere and prophecy of thy love—in that which we are, and are to be, through thy grace.

So we draw near in prayer, not in a meager, poverty-stricken way, as if we were beggars, and as though thou neededst to be persuaded and informed: we come knowing how generous thou art, how affluent thou art, and knowing that such a nature as thine, of sympathy and perfection, stands quick and ready to pour forth blessings. We rejoice that even in the asking we are supplied and over-supplied, not alone in the things which we ask, if they be possible, but in other things multitudinous. We rejoice, O Lord, that thy gifts are so plentiful and so wonderful in their variety. If, being sick, we sigh for the wind to blow that it may cool our cheek, blowing, it also lifts the leaves, wafts fragrance through the air, and cheers a thousand others; bringing a multitude of mercies that are not thought of; and so the breath which thou dost breathe upon our souls bringeth not alone what we ask, but innumerable other things. Sitting central as thou dost in the midst of all divine influences, and pouring forth life everywhere, how canst thou turn thyself every whither, and bestow thy grace upon all! We rejoice in thy sovereignty. We rejoice in the creativeness of thy love. We rejoice that we are all called to thee not to be ranked among animals. We rejoice that there is that in us which reaches far above the flesh into the unknown, and touches God, and is touched by him, and is yet to be fashioned into the divine likeness perfectly, as now it is rudely and imperfectly. And in this hope we desire to live above the world while we are in it, and are using it, and are seeking another and a better land. We pray that we may live in ennobling thoughts of thee, and labor for the working of thy Spirit, and thy divine love in every soul. Cleanse us, we pray thee, from pride and vanity, and all hindering passions; from all outward faults; from temptations that overtake us; from easily besetting sins; from habits imperfectly controlled. Grant that we may become free in Christ Jesus, and turn sensitively toward things which are good, and with an irresistible attraction towards thee. And away from things that are dark and sluggish, and cold and hateful, sin-bred and filled with misery.

We pray, O Lord, that thou wilt draw near, this morning, to those in thy presence who need thee by reason of any special dealings of thy providence with them. Are they children of joy by reason of the overflowing of thy goodness? Then may their joy lift them up, and not make them selfish. May the prosperity of those who, this morning, rejoice in alertness of spirit and good cheer be consecrated in

thanksgiving and praise. May those who have, through thy goodness, achieved the ends which they have long sought, rejoice because they can associate thy foresight and guardianship with all the stages through which they have come. May it be a thing to be rejoiced over, that by God's great help we live from day to day and achieve successfully the tasks of life.

Be with those who are in the midst of not unwelcome trials and troubles; be with those who are manfully bearing this world's burdens; performing its duties; venturing the things that are to be ventured. May all acquit themselves as men, gird up their loins, and never faint. Taught of thee, and day by day receiving fresh supplies from thy unwasting Spirit, may they go on courageously in the work which thou hast imposed upon them. May they this day have the divine blessing and impulse resting upon them. We pray that more and more they may be able to consecrate their powers and endeavors to the welfare of men, and to the honor and glory of God.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt draw near to any who are weak; to any who are sick; to any who are in the gloom of trouble. Wilt thou irradiate their room, if they be hindered from coming to the sanctuary. Wilt thou be with them wherever they watch, and wherever they wait. Grant that they may easily open their arms, forth from which are to go God's angels, lent to them for a little while.

Draw near, our Father, to all who are poor and who are suffering from the mischiefs, and cares, and anxieties which befall them. Grant that though they are poor outwardly, they may be rich of heart, and that they may trust in the divine bounty, though they seem withheld from human bounty. May they be sustained, knowing that they are pilgrims and strangers here, and that it will be but a little while ere they will go hence. May their faith not fail them. May they not suffer from double poverty—without and within.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing upon the young. We thank thee that there are so many who are being nurtured in the Lord. Grant that those that are in our midst may grow up to all manliness; to truth; to fidelity; to industry; to frugality; to temperance in all things; to purity of thought and feeling; to all noble ambitions; to the love of mankind; to the love, and reverence, and obedience of God.

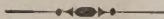
Bless our schools. Bless those who superintend or minister therein. Bless the teachers and officers of these schools. And we pray that it may not be the knowledge of the letter alone, but also that knowledge that maketh wise unto salvation, that shall be imparted and received. We thank thee for so much success as has been granted to these little assemblies. May thy Spirit, with its ever-quickening power, abide in their midst.

We pray for thy blessing upon all those who go forth to make known the unsearchable riches of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, in the waste places, in the by-ways, among the poor and sick, along our wharves, in jails, and prisons, and poor-houses. May those who have volunteered to cheer the unfortunate, and degraded, and desolate, be filled with the very Spirit and with the abundant blessings of the Lord their Master whom they imitate.

Bless, O Lord, the churches of this city, and of our whole land, that are working for thy cause. Be pleased to bless the President of these United States, and those who are joined with him in authority, and the Congress assembled. Grant that all their counselings may be wise, inspired and overruled for the furtherance of thine own purposes. Bless the Legislatures of the different States, the courts, the judges, the magistrates, and all rulers. Grant that the citizens may live obedient lives; that intelligence and morality may prevail; that the hearts of this people may more and more cleave together; and that there may be essential unity throughout the entire nation.

Nor do we pray selfishly for ourselves alone. May thy bounties become universal. May those jealousies cease which have separated nations so long, and those angry passions which have dashed one upon another. May the day come when there shall be the true fellowship of a true brotherhood. May men rise to a higher plane of life. May men seek after the things which shall strengthen, and not for the things that shall weaken one another. May all ignorance and superstition disappear; may the lower feelings cease to rule; may the Spirit of God with all wisdom dwell with all mankind, and this world become as the kingdom of heaven.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*



PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

OUR Father, we pray that thou wilt take away from us the shadow which overhangs the bright and blessed valley through which we seek thee. Bring us at last, we pray thee, to some faith in thy truth. O how long shall the heavens drop down upon us promises! How long shall thy words be in our ears not understood? How long to the dumb and to the deaf shall they call from off the walls of heaven, saying, Come? How long shall we believe in things which belong to the body, and not in things which belong to the soul? Blessed Spirit, give to us something of our birthright; something of the vision that belongs to us; and grant that our sorrows, which have so surged about us in the past, may, at the coming of Christ, be assuaged. Grant that our disappointed hopes may seem to be grafted on a better and more enduring stalk in the other life. May we rise up and set our affection on things above, where Christ sitteth, on the right hand of God, and not on things upon the earth. Wilt thou bless us, now, for the rest of this day, and prepare us for its events, and for thy kingdom at last, through riches of grace in Christ Jesus. *Amen.*

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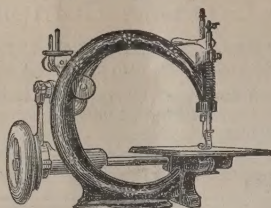
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